



THE LEGION LINK

THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA PUBLICATION



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Submit Articles at

floridalegion.org/submit or legionlink@floridalegion.org

Questions? legionlink@floridalegion.org

From your Dept Commander Jerry Brandt

Jerry Brandt, Commander

commander@floridalegion.org



Department of Florida is off to a great start for the new Legion Year. At the Conference, the Department Executive Committee approved a committee to review and revise the Department Constitution By-Laws.

The Committee is headed by PDC Omar Gene Smith. PDC Smith and his staff are hard at work with the By-Laws and the first Rough Draft will be sent to the DEC members around the 1st of October. I expect a long and rough Department Executive Committee Meeting at the Fall Conference where we will decide what needs to be changed and why. I am looking forward to this meeting, as it is a step in the right direction for the Department of Florida.

By the way, at the Convention Bruce Comer became the new Department Adjutant. When you see him, thank him for his service and for stepping up to a vital position within Department.

Also, in July, we had our annual retreat, in which the District, Area, and Zone Commanders, learn more about the Department of Florida American Legion. And for the first time in many years, the District Commanders were almost all new faces, as well as the Area Commanders. All

I can say, thank you for stepping up within the Department, we need an infusion of new blood within our ranks. You are a step in the right direction.

Also at the retreat, we handed out to our Mentors a new Pin, the Pin indicated that they are a "Florida Family Mentor". How do you get this Pin? 1. You have to have someone, whom you have mentored, step up to indicate you are their Mentor. 2. You and the person who nominated you, must be at a District meeting in which the Zone Commander, S.A.L. Commander, Auxiliary President, or myself is in attendance.

We will NOT give the Pin to you. The person who indicated you are their mentor will give you the Pin, as a way to say thank you.

We will be holding Area Training in September and October, for not only the Area and District teams, but also for all who wants to move up. Currently, we have the following schedule:

- September 11th, Southern Area
- September 12th, Eastern Area
- September 18th, Central Area, training will be at Post 72, in Mulberry FL. Starting at 0900.
- September 19th, Southwest Area
- September 25th, Western Area
- September 26th, Eastern Northern Area
- October 2nd, Western Northern Area

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I am pending the remaining locations currently.

In October, the Florida American Legion Riders will be traveling on a five (5) State Ride, what a fun ride. The Florida riders will share their stories of fundraising ideas concerning Vet Relief, Children and Youth

programs, COTA, and for those who had fallen. The States involved are Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Florida. The ride will assist those states who want support for their Department Riders.

I hope to see all of you on my travels. After all, we are brothers and sisters, in war and in Peace, take care.

Start Pushing Membership

Eunice Butts, 1st Vice Commander
1stvice@legionmail.org



Greetings fellow Legionnaires. Thank you electing me 1st Vice Commander for the Department of Florida. Together as a team, we can accomplish great things beyond our

individual achievements within out Post, District, Area, and Zone. I recommend each of you to continue to be careful as COVID-19 is not over.

I look forward to visiting all the posts within Zone I. My goal is to assist the District and Area Commanders whenever needed regarding training, membership, buddy

checks, etc. Even though we have lost many members, there are still many veterans in your communities who have not been invited to join us. Tap into the 400s and transfer DMS members and be sure to keep in mind the Legion Act which opened the dates of eligibility for membership to help us tremendously. I am excited for a very good year in the Eastern and Southern Areas of Florida. I wish you a productive year in your membership, programs, etc.

“We are no better than we are.” “We are no better than the service we give.” “We are no better than the thoughts we think.” “We are no better than the lives we live.” “We are in fact; only as good as we are as an organization, as leaders and individuals.”

We Made It

Michael Raymond, 2nd Vice Commander
2ndvice@legionmail.org



It’s been a long and hard road over the last 2 years but as a team we came through with flying colors. As of this writing I have just arrived at the Dept. training hotel in Orlando after a brief stop in Palm

Bay to check on our immediate past Dept. Commander.

He is in great spirits and in a lot better shape than he was a few short weeks ago. I’m sure if he sticks to his regiment and completes his rehab, he will be back in better shape than he was before. It sure does open your eyes a

bit when you think about it. It could happen to any of us.

Although we did finish the year strong, we all know what we must do to make this an even better year. I plan on making it to as many installations as possible to let you know that I am at your service. I want to attend and support your events whether big or small, and I want to attend your meetings, if only just to observe. But I am here to help you. I will raise money for you, make phone calls, attend funerals or just come to visit. I can’t help, if you don’t ask and keep me informed!

So please don’t hesitate to call and let’s have a great year!

AUGUST 2021	
1-31	Antiterrorism Month
1	Friendship Day
1	Air Force Day
1	Samsung Scholarship Applications Due ★
1	District 4: Meeting
2	Operation Desert Shield (1990)
3-8	Baseball: Regional Tournament ★
4	U.S. Coast Guard Birthday
4	Central Area: Installation Post 389
5	Central Area: Installation Post 5
7	Purple Heart Day
7	Central Area: Installation Post 138
7	Central Area: Installation Post 139
8	District 3: Meeting
8	District 5: Meeting
9	Area Commander Visit: Post 15
10	U.S. Department of Defense Birthday
10	Agent Orange Awareness Day
12-17	Legion Baseball World Series ★
12	Belgrano Department Narratives Due ★
12	Area Commander Visit: Post 34
13	Baseball: Scholarship Applications Due ★
14	Post 111 Hawaiian Shirt Ride
14	Military Marriage Day
14	National Spirit of '45 Day
14	Navajo Code Talkers Day
14	V-J Day (1945)
14	District 17: Post Officer Training
14	District 7: Meeting
15	Legion Link Articles Due for September
15	Officer Training: Post 120
15	Raise the Roof Poker Tournament
16	Airborne Day
19	National Aviation Day
19	Area Commander Visit: Post 201
21	Senior Citizen Day
21	District 1: Meeting
21	District 3: Meeting
21	Post 186: Adopt-A-Highway
22-26	ALR Legacy Run
26	Womens' Equality Day
27-2	National Convention ☆ ★
27-28	Baseball: N/S All Star Game ★
29	Marine Forces Reserve Birthday

☆ Commander Jerry Brandt's Attendance Tentative.
 ★ National Event

Events are subject to change. Additional details can be found at www.floridalegion.org. We share the information we are provided.





Planning To Be Busy

Chris Hamrick, 3rd Vice Commander

3rdvice@legionmail.org



I would like to start off by thanking you for your support for my new position as your 3rd Vice Commander for this year. I look forward to working with the Area Commanders, the District Commanders and most importantly, YOU, the members.

Let's have fun.

Zone Three is a huge area, and I expect to be all over the place in it. I'm excited to be planning to attend more than just required meetings. I hope to visit and participate in many Post events during the year. There's not much information to cover as of yet for Zone three, as calendars are being created or updated at this time. But as the next Legion Link comes out, expect to see more from me. Once again, thank you. Keep it Real.

Power In Prayer

Barry Roberts, Chaplain

chaplain@legionmail.org



We have much to be grateful for and our fellowship at our Convention was such a blessing! Praise God we can move forward again.

God has answered our prayer and PDC Rick Johnson has experienced divine healing and the answer to prayer. There is power in prayer! Let us continue to join together in prayer for our calling to serve.

As part of our Challenge 22 efforts, I have been in contact with the American Association of Christian Counselors and we are being offered a faith based Mental Health Life Coach Certificate through Legion Church.

It is about forty-five (45) hours of online training and the \$2,400 tuition has been waived, so the only cost is a \$54.00 administration fee. I already have several people from around the state enrolled in the program.

If you would like to know more please email me at bwroberts@rocketmail.com or call me at 863-661-9999.

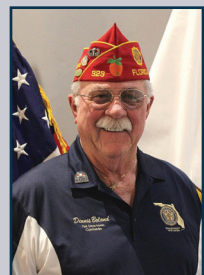
Let's be proactive together in preserving "For God and Country" and let's be proactive together in reaching out into our communities and serving our veterans and their families. Let's be proactive together and go help somebody....

I am here for you, feel free to join and participate on Facebook, www.facebook.com/floridalegionchaplains

Service History

Dennis Boland, NEC

nec@legionmail.org



As I travel our great Nation and the Department of Florida, I have seen some people have their own agenda. For over 100 years, the American Legion has stood fast in serving

the four (4) pillars of The American Legion; Americanism, Children & Youth, National Security and Veterans Affairs. They are not just names, but programs that have fulfilled the lives of many veterans and children of our Nation.

We have a history that I believe no other service organization can duplicate.

- August 9, 1921, through The Legion's efforts result in the creation of the U.S. Veterans Bureau, forerunner of the Veterans Administration.
- December 15, 1943, Past National Commander Harry W. Colmery starts to write in longhand, on Mayflower Hotel stationery in Washington, the first draft of what later became the "GI Bill of Rights"
- May 39, 1946, The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary present a small, struggling organization called the American Heart Association with a \$50,000 grant.
- July 9, 1954, The American Legion

Child Welfare Foundation is formed. Today, more than \$18 million has been awarded to youth organizations.

- August 26, 1982, The Legion presents a \$1 million check to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund for construction of the Vietnam Wall.
- July 21, 1983, The Legion sponsors an independent study on the effects of exposure to Agent Orange on Vietnam War veterans.
- August 2, 1990, The Legion files suit against the federal government for failure to conduct a Congress mandated study of the effects of Agent Orange.
- June 11, 1997, The Legion's National Emergency Fund surpasses the \$1 million mark in cash grants given to flood victims who belong to the Legion family.
- October 17, 2003, American Legion efforts on Capitol Hill breaks the deadlock on the Disabled Veterans Tax.
- October 2007, By Resolution #35 the Legion adopts The American Legion Riders.
- October 2010, The Legion forms a PTS-TBI Ad Hoc Committee to both examine current methods by the VA and the Department of Defense.

The Legion continues in the tradition of our forefathers, serving our veterans and the children of our community, state, and nation.





I Came, I Saw, I'm Here

Phillip Crouthamel, Historian

historian@legionmail.org



First, I am honored to be your new Department Historian. A little background on me since I'm the "new kid on the block." I have been a member of the American Legion for close to 30 years

(non-continuous) with 25 of those years in Pennsylvania. I've held positions of Adjutant

and Commander at my old post, Archer-Epler Post 979 in Upper Darby, Pa.

We moved to Florida in 2016 to Summerfield. No, we are not Villagers. I transferred to Veterans Memorial Post 347, Lady Lake in 2017. I have been the Historian there going on my third year.

Enough about me. My goal as your Historian is to attempt to get more Posts involved in compiling their history, scrapbooks, narratives, or open books. At this past convention, out of over 280 posts in the

Department of Florida, only ten books were submitted. One of those books was submitted by Post 403 in Bushnell which happens to be the State Penitentiary, and it was done by hand.

All it takes is a little organization and a commitment to seeing it through. I will always be available to lend assistance.

If you have any comments or questions, please feel free to shoot me an email to historian@legionmail.org.

Central Area News

Bruce Carl, Central Area Commander

centralarea@legionmail.org



I am honored to serve as your Central Area Commander for the 2021-2022 year. I am looking forward to serving the members of the 7th, 15th, and 16th Districts. This should be an exciting

year with several training events planned, and the return of the Central Area Ball. I will be looking for volunteers to help me with the ball, so if you are interested, please let me know. I expect to start planning the Ball after the National Convention in September.

As always, membership will be a top

priority, and by the time this article is printed, we will have held our Membership training for the entire Central Area. Please feel free to contact me if you need help with anything your District Commanders may not be able to assist you with. This includes membership, programs, Post issues, etc. If I do not have the answer, I will get one and respond back to you promptly.

In addition to our normal activities and programs, we will also have the honor of both the Department Commander and National Commander visiting our Area this year. As I receive the information and plan the agenda, I will get that out to you.

I have created a Facebook page (Central Area American Legion Florida) for everyone to Post flyers for events for your Posts and Districts. Communication is the best way

to achieve success, and this extra free advertising will help bring more people to your events! You can post to the site itself, or send them to me, and I will post them for you.

Thank you for your confidence in electing me your Area Commander, and I look forward to visiting each Post in the District. I will contact your Post prior to my official visit, but that does not mean I might not stop in just for a social visit. Let's make the Central Area the best in the Department by working together, not just as an Area, but as a family within each of our Posts. The Auxiliary, SAL, and ALR all bring valuable help and funds to our organization. Working together with all our family can only strengthen and improve our Posts and Area.

Southern Area

Johnny Castro, Southern Area Commander

southernarea@legionmail.org



The last year and a half brought with it challenges that made us face uncertainties in how our future would pan out. This includes whether we would be able to continue to support

our veterans, their families, the community, and our own families. During those difficult

times, I witnessed true leaders within the 11th District continues to do great work. Simultaneously, I began to identify several with leadership potential, and began mentoring them in becoming the future leaders of the Post, District, Area, and Department levels.

As the incoming Southern Area Commander, I look forward to working with both 9th District Commander Geo Bograkos and 14th District Commander Tom Frank. I will continue to mentor and support our 11th

District Commander Harry Malecki in the coming years, as I see him continue to do great things. There are those who wonder how a 6-year member of the American Legion can mentor others. For me, part of the answer lies in going back to when we were all still in the military and becoming an expert in our field. We had TMs, FMs, and AR publications to sharpen our skills in our job responsibilities.

In the American Legion, it is no different. We

Southern Area Commander Continued on page 5 >>





<< Southern Area Commander Continued from page 4

have the Officer's Guide, specific manuals for specific job responsibilities, a rule or game book, the Post Constitution and By-Laws (CBL), which every Post, District, and Department has. This is derived from the National's CBL. In the Post, every member has a say on how their Post is ran, as long as they follow the CBL and have it approved by a majority vote of the membership.

The other part of the answer is heart. It takes

a special person to put in all of those hours and not get paid. I've been asked: why give a part of yourself and not be compensated? My response: I am compensated by seeing veterans being able to take care of themselves and their families. They are able to give back to their communities and assist others who could use a hand. This is ingrained in who we are, as veterans who are there for other veterans, just as in the military.

My mentors? You, the American Legion family.

As the Southern Area Commander, my first order of business was representing 14th District Commander Tom Frank in the Florida Keys while he was away. I visited all five Posts, installed three, and trained two. It was incredible meeting the members of Key West, Marathon, Islamorada, and Key Largo. They are amazing, and I learned that some things are done differently down there.

Renew Reinstate Recruit

Bruce Thurber, Eastern Membership Chair
membership@legionmail.org



I am honored to have been asked by Commander Brandt to serve as your Department of Florida Membership Chairman East. Moving into the 103rd Membership Year of The American

Legion is the most critical focus we must have. If we do not get growth, our ability to serve our Veterans will diminish. As we move on our priorities need to be:

- Renew: Encourage members to renew, by focusing on their needs within the Legion Family.
- Reinstate: Using the resources available find those members who haven't renewed over the past few years, contact them question why and see if you can help with fixing what drove them away.

- Recruit: Finding potential members is easy but giving them a reason to want to join us takes a few minutes of your time. Ask yourself, do I know 4 good reasons to join the Legion and can I explain them.

One of the best tools for membership is myLegion.Org:

myLegion.org is a FREE website designed to connect members of The American Legion to their Post and Department leadership, myLegion includes a site at each level of the organization:

Members - allows members to view information on file at National Headquarters, view messages and events published through the department and post myLegion sites, and network with other myLegion members using networking tools.

Departments - provides membership information, reports and electronic membership tools such as data change

forms for all posts and squadrons within their department.

Posts/Districts/Counties - provides Legion and SAL information for all members in their post. Allows post to submit member data change forms and Consolidated Post Reports electronically. Upload post image, newsletter, message, and calendar. I also suggest that posts encourage every family member to take the Legion Institute Basic Training.

Assistance will be available at your request at all levels. It may include one on one, Post, District or Area Level Classrooms or round tables. Please contact me so that I can get you on the calendar.

Training Tuesdays is another great resource. The last Tuesday of each month National has training on a variety of topics. You can go back and get PDF or Power Point information. <https://www.legion.org/training/training-tuesdays>

Review Membership Manual

Randy Holeyfield, Western Membership Chair
membershipfal@legionmail.org



Well, following a year in stasis from COVID-19 we were able to have our Department Convention to vote in our officers for 2021-2022. And with that, our new Department

Commander has set his cabinet of Chairmen and associated positions for a stellar year ahead. I, for one, want to thank Commander Jerry Brandt for appointing myself, as well as Bruce Thurber, as his Membership Chairmen.

This year the Commander has divided the state with an East/West divide. The demarcation line is along District lines, pretty much down the center of the state, to which: **Western** is from Pensacola to

Naples with Districts: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 13, 15 & 16. Whereas, **Eastern** is from Jacksonville to Key West, with Districts 5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 14 & 17. Plus, our Revitalization Chair is Judith Richards, the three of us will be there for any and everyone who needs assistance, and in some cases, where the Department Commander may send us for specific help and/or training.

Western Membership Chair Continued on page 6 >>





<< *Western Membership Chair Continued from page 5*
The New Membership and Awards Manual is out, either online or hard copy (as delivered to posts in their membership cards packets at convention). In it you will see the Battle Plans, programs, suggested informational training & our awards for the upcoming year. The Membership Team has been working on this for several months (Jerry was everyone's

choice and won, but the team knew that, and we worked diligently towards a common goal of victory, to have Florida at 100% this year).

One of the power programs is the **DMS** (Post 0400), of which there are promoted ways for expanding the rosters of Florida's posts.

Did you know that Post 0400 members are veterans already in The American Legion? And no different than someone you might meet at a store or at a park. Both would need verification of their discharge character to be done, but they are equal in stature and eligibility for joining.

The Department of Florida Legion College 2021

Jim Ramos, Florida Legion College Chair
deptlegioncollege@legionmail.org



Hello, I'm Jim Ramos your new Chair for Florida Legion College 2021-2022. We are hoping for a big group of highly motivated legionnaires to come and join us for this year's class.

We can start the year right, with a class held on December 16-19, 2021, at Department Headquarters.

All applications are due by November 19, 2021, with your fees of \$200.00 to attend the College. Fees include shared overnight accommodations, meals and supplies. Application is available online and included

with this month's Legion Link.

Description: The Florida Legion College is intended to teach the principles and techniques necessary for effective leadership at the next levels within the Department of Florida. The successful graduate will possess the education and skills necessary to provide program and command leadership at the district level and higher.

Some of the Topics:

- Leadership and mentoring,
- Communicate using face to face, and social media and written,
- Critical thinking and problem solving,
- Team building to set and accomplish goals,
- Develop or broaden networking,
- Develop, instruct, and support the Post,

District, and Department level training platform,

All course materials will be supplied to all the students. As a student, you can use your laptop for assignment and other work for the group and class.

Please complete the following:

- Florida Legion College application with \$200.00
- Be ready to work hard and long hours,
- Follow the dress code,

More information is available on the Department website at floridalegion.org.

If you have any questions, please contact me by Phone at 352-226-4370 or email deptlegioncollege@floridalegion.org

Family Growth

Jim Wineland, American Legion Riders Chair
legionriders@legionmail.org



It's going to be another great year and Bev & I want to thank our incoming Commander Jerry Brandt for keeping us on board! One of the reasons we have been successful is our family attitude and passion for

the program. What a way to end our 2021 Legion Year, I still cannot believe the goal that we reached. We now can help several of our veterans, but the problem is, the need is still growing. As I mentioned in my last article, we've set a high bar for next year, but I've also heard some new ideas floating around at convention.

We have truly grown into a Legion Family Program. If you look at our membership numbers for our last two full years. The Legionnaires have grown by 20% to a total of 4,096, SAL grew by 83% for a total of 3,252 and the Auxiliary grew by 78% totaling 3,364 members. This gives us a total membership of 10,712 based on the yearly CPRs Always remember, Family First!

I know most of you are familiar with our succession plan or the need for it. Bev & I are starting the plan with Joe Marcheggiani as the ALR Chief Road Captain, and he is busy planning our In-State-Unity Ride. Jeff Hawk is also working with Joe on the Ride and while taking care of his position as Event Coordinator for the Rally and Summit. We are looking for more volunteers! We are looking

for different locations for both the Rally and Summit.

As the ALR Department of Florida, we have surrounded ourselves with a group of true champions that stay focused on the tasks at hand and have a passion for the program. Now of course what are we going to do this year, wait and see.

If you have any ideas, please share!

Beverly & I have already started putting together next year's schedule. The Summit Meet & Greet will be on February 2, followed by classes on 3rd, 4th & 5th. Still working on the In-State Rally, more to come. Again, Thank You for all your Efforts!

American Legion Riders Chair Continued on page 7 >>





<< American Legion Riders Chair Continued from page 6

Here is our tentative schedule for the upcoming year.

- **POW/MIA Ceremony**
September 18th, 2021, Jacksonville
- **MGR**
October 2021
- **5 State Fun Run**
October 10th – 16th, 2021

- **Fall Conference**
November 5-7th 2021
- **Summit, 2022**
Feb. 2nd Meet & Greet, classes 3rd – 5th Safety Class on the 6th
- **Round Robin**
April 2022
- **In-State**
April 24th Meet & Greet, Ride April 25– 29th

- **Rally**
April 30th, 2022

Beverly and I would like to thank each of you for the support we received this last year! Thank You for what you do, and we are proud to be part of your Leadership Team of such a great group!

Tell Me about Your Post Blood Drive

Taz Gehling, Blood Donor Chair

blooddonor@legionmail.org



Hello my fellow Legionnaires and family,

I would like to thank Commander Brandt for giving me the opportunity to continue serving this great department. I

look forward to a great year under his leadership. I want to thank Ray Perez for his work for the past two (2) years as the previous Blood Donor Chairman.

I have already been to two (2) post that have had blood drives this past month. If your post is hosting a blood drive, please send me an email at blooddonor@legionmail.org to let me know and I will try and come to the event.

Here are some facts about blood donations from the American Red Cross, <https://www.redcrossblood.org/donate-blood/how-to-donate/how-blood-donations-help/blood-needs-blood-supply.html>:

- Less than 38 percent of the population is eligible to give blood or platelets.
- Blood and platelets cannot be manufactured; they can only come from volunteer donors.

- The blood type most often requested by hospitals is type O.
- One donation can potentially save up to three lives.

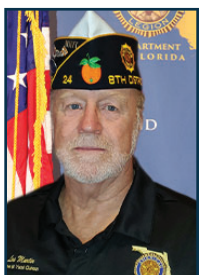
Remember that this is a program with very work usually involved by the post volunteers. Normally, the post just needs to reach out to their local blood bank to schedule a drive at their location. One thing that I usually tell people is that when doing so, try and schedule it during an event to try and increase the possible number of donors.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at 239-785-8282.

Big Plans Coming

Les Martin, Children & Youth Chair

cy@legionmail.org



I hope everyone is having a wonderful and healthy summer. I will be contacting all our District Commanders in the next few weeks to set up my District meeting visits. It will be nice to see all the

fabulous legionnaires again, doing what they do best, HELPING VETERANS. I hope everyone had a great Convention and had an opportunity to attend some of the training sessions that were set up for you, and Congratulations to all of our newly elected Department Officers.

I am honored to again serve as your Children

& Youth Chairman. I am looking forward to a successful year for the kids of Florida and children of our veterans. I can't do this alone. I need your help, by supporting our activities this year and your donations to the Children & Youth Committee. Speaking of activities, Commander Jerry Brandt has asked me to set up a Children & Youth sponsored Cruise. I will be contacting Past Department Commander Rick Johnson's wife Reenie, for assistance in setting this up. (She is a vacation planner for Carnival Cruise Lines). Jerry would like to see as many Legion family members as possible to join us on the cruise for a great time socializing with each other and enjoying the sea. Remember, Jerry and I are both Navy and love the sea.

We will again have two fundraisers for Children & Youth. Our Picnic in April and

our Golf Tournament. Start thinking now about attending these events. As PDC Rick Johnson said many times last year, "it's for the kids". I will be working with the Department to come up with a new Children & Youth pin design for 2021-2022. When these become available, PLEASE purchase one, it is your purchase of these pins that help our programs.

I am keeping this short, until I can get more information about our upcoming events and visits. Stay safe and I will be seeing many of you soon.





Children & Youth Fun Grant Recipients

Les Martin, Children & Youth Fund Chair
cyfund@legionmail.org



Purpose of the Fund

“The Children & Youth Fund provides financial support to programs and projects that enhance the lives of children in the State of Florida. The organization that is seeking funding must be well established in contributing to the physical, mental and emotional welfare of children throughout the community of which service is provided”

Funding Policies

- Funding is determined and provided by The American Legion Florida Children & Youth Fund Board of Directors.
- Funds can range to a maximum of \$5,000.
- Any Funds received will be a one-time allotment for the year; Funds are not renewable.
- Any Funds received must be used between August 1st to July 31st of the award year.
- All funds must be used directly to benefit the children of the State of Florida.
- If you receive a Grant, you must wait

two years before reapplying.

This year, the Directors approved two Grants of \$5,000 each. One to the Keystone Bills Booster Club in Odessa, Florida. Their Grant will be used to purchase football safety equipment for their youth athletes. The other Grant was given to Helping Enrich Autistic Lives (HEAL). HEAL will donate and deliver iPads and Trikes to local schools for Exceptional Student Education (ESE) programs throughout five school districts in Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau and St. Johns counties.

It is an honor to help these applicants, who help the children of Florida.

Hurricane Season is Here

Bill Hoppner, Disaster Preparedness Chair
disasterprep@legionmail.org



As of June 14, we have had four (4) tropical storms and a category 1 hurricane. Due to the storms coming earlier in the season the dates will be changed to May 15 through November 30 of each year instead of June 1 through November 30. The peak of hurricane season is August and September.

We hear phrases like turn around, don't drown, hide from the wind, and run from the water. These are phrases used to explain

how dangerous a storm can be. They are self-explanatory and common sense. I can't express my concerns enough for the safety of all. Most of the injuries come after the storms. Using chain saws without ear and eye protection and proper instruction can be deadly. Generators are dangerous pieces of equipment that are used after a storm if not properly used. Carbon monoxide, is a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas is discharged by gas engines that operate your generators. They should never operating generators in a garage or inside your home.

They should be operated in a well-vented open area. That also goes for BBQ grills that give off toxic gases. Always treat down wires as live never take for granted that they are

dead.

Before a storm, you should have your Hurricane supply kit ready if you must evacuate. Also, have all your important papers in a watertight container. Use your phone to take pictures, and if equipped, take videos of all the rooms and garage for insurance purposes. If you evacuate, make sure you have these items and notify relatives of where you will be. As always, I can be reached at 305-968-7979 or by e-mail disasterprep@legionmail.org. Stay tuned to your local news and weather report. Disaster Preparedness packets that will be sent to all Posts. I will also continue be following storms on Facebook.

New Semester, New Beginning

Loretta Young, ROTC/JROTC & JSSP Chair
jrotc@legionmail.org



Welcome to all the new ROTC/JROTC/ JSSP Chairmen and the seasoned returning supporters to our Legion Youth Programs. Getting an early start with the programs will assist you as chairmen

and the youth and teams that you support,

to meet the deadlines. Schools will shortly be getting back in session and early contact with the schools, instructors, team coaches, etc., is a key to making those deadlines. Making contact with the schools by email is usually the best method of reaching instructors due to their heavy demand during the day and not being available after school hours.

Introduce who you are and what the Legion has to offer with our Youth Programs. Let

them know that your Post is available to support them in their programs and in return, they can assist the post with events, holiday programs, dinners, etc., that the Post has throughout the year. They can get community service hours for helping the Post, and it gives the Veterans a youthful shoulder to lean on. A win, win situation.

We had the pleasure to meet our two JSSP Champions at the Department Convention.

ROTC/JROTC & JSSP Chair Continued on page 9 >>





<< ROTC/JROTC & JSSP Chair Continued from page 8

Our National JSSP Precision Winner from Sarasota Military Academy, Sophia Olazabal and our Sporter State Winner from Vanguard NJROTC in Ocala, Ariana Ramos.

The National JSSP Competition will be held in Colorado Springs July 21-24. Results will be posted on the National website. I will be attending as a Staff Member Volunteer and will follow up with an overview in the next Legion Link Article. As a reminder, the JSSP Marksmanship Postal Registration goes

online on September 1st. All coaches must take the Safe Sport Training online course and pass the background check. Since this is all done online, the suggestion is for the Post to reimburse the team coach the \$20 cost along with the cost of the targets, which are \$15 each. All teams must also have the Affiliation Form filled out by the Post Commander sponsoring the team, which is submitted online at the time of registration. Several teams this last year who were already doing the marksmanship program ran out

of time because this was not done. The deadline for entry is December 15th. Let's see if the Department of Florida will have another State or National Champion.

I want to thank Commander Jerry Brandt for giving me the opportunity to serve the Department of Florida once again with this very worthwhile and rewarding program to promote our youth, the future of our country. Please reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns, and I look forward to a very successful program this year.

Post Development Bulletin

Judith Richards, Post Development Chair
postdevelopment@legionmail.org



Hello! Welcome to a new and exciting year where we will work together for membership revitalization! I am the Department Post Development Chair and will work closely

with Bruce Thurber and Randy Holyfield the Department Membership Chairs for East and West, respectively. Please connect with me if you need assistance in revitalizing your Post or if you have suggestions for other Posts on how to recommit to membership growth and working within your community! I look forward to meeting many of you and working together in making Florida the number one Department in the American Legion!

A New Beginning

Richard Smith, SAL Advisor
sal@legionmail.org



A new beginning. Not only are we coming into a new Legion year, but we are finally coming out of the strangest year that I can certainly remember.

The SAL in every Post did great things with so little opportunity this last year. As a Post remember to get your Squadron involved in your meetings, programs, dinners, anything you do. They are one of the biggest assets you have.

The MyLegion SAL portion is not working right as of this writing. I hope that it is fixed in time for our reporting. As a last note, I wish PDC Johnson all the best in his recovery.

Support Special Olympics

George DeAngelo, Special Olympics Chair
specialolympics@legionmail.org



Hello! Welcome to a new and exciting year where we will work together for Special Olympics! I am the Department Special Olympics Chair and look forward to working

with all of you. As you are scheduling your events, please copy me and I will make every effort to attend. We can also get it published in the Legion Link. Send pictures and a report of your event and I will get it posted to the Legion Link so everyone in the Department can witness all the great things happening for Special Olympics. Let's make this a record breaking year!

A Great Convention

Deb Wheeler, Womens' Veterans Chair
womenveterans@legionmail.org



What a wonderful convention! I was extremely moved by the number of District Commanders that approached me regarding Women Veterans and the large number of Women Veterans who approached me

was wonderful jumping on board to offer assistance and ideas.

A goal I have will be to host a Women Veteran Summit on a weekend. I need to check the weekends that are available with the least amount of District, Department events scheduled. This event will be held and sponsored by the Dunedin Memorial Post 275 in Dunedin FL.

Another goal I have is starting a Facebook page for the Women Veterans of the Department of Florida. The goal is to have a

web address by the next Legion Link.

Lastly, I plan on developing a brochure or a poster for Women Veterans of the Department of Florida. Lots to do, but I would be remiss if I didn't thank the staff at the Department and the many female veterans within the State of Florida! This is not only for awareness but potential new Legionnaires!

I thank everyone for this great opportunity, most of us have never had.





CONGRATULATIONS TO JERRY BRANDT on becoming the 2021-2022 Department Commander for The American Legion, Department of Florida!

We were delighted to learn that he has chosen PROJECT: VetRelief as his charity for his Commander's Project. Any donation marked as "Commander's Charity" will count towards his efforts. Commander Brandt has set a goal to raise \$50,000 during his one-year term. Legion Posts are asked to make a one-time donation or hold fundraising event(s) to help him reach his goal.

If you are planning an event for PROJECT: VetRelief, we can help promote it. Contact Jennifer Cooper by sending an email to jcooper@floridalegion.org with all of the details!

CONVENTION RECAP

It was great being able to see some familiar faces during our Department Convention this past month. There were plenty of activities, classes and presentations for you to partake in. Here are just a few of our highlights:

- Collected \$112,083 in Legion Family donations (\$54,500 from Home at Last; \$32,163 from SAL; \$17,800 from Legion; and \$7,620 from ALR)
- Provided program updates, accomplishments and future plans during the Legion, Sons of the American Legion and Legion Riders' general sessions
- Trained new VetRelief Advocates

Additionally, the Florida American Legion Auxiliary elected Wanda Brandt as their next Department President. We are excited that she chose to support PVR as her project. Like us, her passion is to keep veterans off the streets; which has been our primary focus since 2014. The majority of our funds has gone towards housing assistance; like rent, mortgage or HUD-VASH vouchers to keep veterans within their own homes. We are extremely

thrilled that the Auxiliary will be joining our mission to continue to provide this type of service to Florida's veterans and their families!

Lastly, we are grateful for PDC William 'Rick' Johnson's support over the last two years. He increased program awareness within the Legion Family and local communities, and raised over \$300,000! **THANK YOU, Rick!** We are looking forward to having you as a Board of Director and helping us continue to fundraise.

THANK YOU, HOME AT LAST

It was an honor to be selected by the folks from Home at Last to receive a portion of their funds as they dissolved their organization. They donated \$54,500 to PROJECT: VetRelief to support veterans through financial hardships! Members of their Board of Directors are also affiliated with Legion Post 55 in Clermont. **THANK YOU!!**



SUPPORT CASES

JULY 2020 - JUNE 2021

*Reflect PVR Cases ONLY



232 FAMILIES ASSISTED



\$216,302.79
AMOUNT DISTRIBUTED



Scouting Awards

Chris Ragusa, Scouting Chair
scouting@legionmail.org



2020 Outstanding Post Scouting Program Recipients - Post 273 (Madeira Beach) and Post 90 (Cape Coral): It is my honor to recognize two of our Posts for their excellence and leadership in support

of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) Scouting program from May 1, 2020 – April 30, 2021 with the Department of Florida 2020 Outstanding Post Scouting Program award. Post 273 (District 16) in Madeira Beach charters both Scouts BSA Troop 431 and the newly formed Troop 431G. Post 90 (District 13) in Cape Coral charters three BSA units – Cub Scout Pack 777, Scouts BSA Troop 777, and Scouts BSA Troop 2020G. There are three common denominators in this year’s award-winning posts. Both benefit from active and engaged leadership from the front by their Post Scouting Chairs, Anthony Torregrossa from Post 273 and Dennis Stebbins from Post 90. Each of these Posts charter multiple BSA units. These Posts each charter a Scouts BSA girls troop. Girls became eligible for BSA membership in the Cub Scouts (the 5-10-year-old program) in September 2018, and Scouts BSA (the 11-17-year-old program) in February 2019. Bravo Zulu to these posts and the outstanding leadership provided by their Post Commanders and Scouting Chairs!

Department of Florida 2021 Eagle Scout of the Year Recipient – Robert O’Bryan, Scouts BSA Troop 481, Chartered to Post 1 (Titusville): Robbie O’Bryan is the Department of Florida Eagle Scout of the Year for 2021. To be eligible for this award, the Scout must be an active and registered member of a BSA unit that is chartered to an American Legion Post, Auxiliary Unit

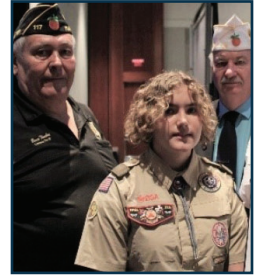
or SAL Squadron. Additionally, he or she must have earned the rank of Eagle Scout, received a Scouts BSA or Venturer Religious Emblem, have demonstrated practical citizenship in church, school, Scouting and the community, and have reached their 15th birthday and be enrolled in high school at the time of selection. Robbie joined Cub Scouts in 2008, achieved the highest rank in that program...the Arrow of Light... and crossed over to Scouts BSA Troop 481 in 2014. Robbie is the recipient of three Eagle Palms, each signifying 5 merit badges beyond the elective and required 21 merit badges for the rank of Eagle. He is a member



of the Order of the Arrow, which is a peer-elected obligation to cheerfully serve for the betterment of Scouting. A member of the National Honor Society, an active member of St. Theresa Catholic Church, an accomplished athlete, and a consummate leader, Robbie embodies the spirit of the rank of Eagle Scout, and will proudly represent Florida in the National Eagle Scout of the Year selection process. We are pictured here with Post 1 Commander Donna Hamilton and Department of Florida Commander Jerry Brandt.

Citation of Good Citizenship for Eagle Scout Alexis Woods, Scouts BSA Troop 117G, Chartered to Post 117 (Palm Bay): Alexis, a pioneer for girls in Scouting, joined Cub Scout Pack 484 in September 2018, and earned the Arrow of Light before joining Scouts BSA Troop 117G in 2019. She is the

first Eagle Scout from Troop 117G to earn this rank, and to my knowledge, the first female in a Florida American Legion-chartered troop to achieve the Eagle Scout rank.



Nominated for this citation by the Post 117 Scouting Chair, Kevin McGarry, Alexis and I are pictured with Post 117 Commander Bruce Thurber and Department of Florida Commander Jerry Brandt.

American Legion and SAL-chartered Cub Scout Camporee at MacDill AFB from Friday, November 12 – Sunday, November 14, 2021:

Lewis Lake Scout Camp on MacDill AFB in Tampa, FL has been reserved for an overnight Cub Scout Camporee specifically for American Legion Post, Auxiliary unit, and Sons of the American Legion Squadron-chartered Cub Scout packs. The primitive camping weekend will be jam packed with tours of the Air Traffic Control Tower and Flight Simulator, the base’s Flightline Fire and Rescue station, Maritime Coastal Patrol hanger and dock, an Armory weapons orientation, and a 6th Security Forces Squadron Military Dog Handling unit demo. We’ll have a cookout in the base Marina beach pavilions, a catered BBQ dinner, and campfires and s’mores to finish off the night. Email me at the address below for an information packet about this event.



American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Florida - NOW HIRING!

The American Legion Auxiliary Department of Florida is hiring for the **Department Treasurer** position. To apply go to <https://indeedhi.re/3rIvhu0>





Veteran Resources

Larry Roberts, VA Entitlements Chair
veteransbenefits@legionmail.org



I would like to thank Jerry for allowing me to stay on as the American Legion Department of Florida VA Entitlements Chairman and Project VetRelief Chairman.

Here is a list of Resources that can help our veterans.

- **National Suicide Prevention Hotline/ Veterans Crisis Line:** 800-273-8255 press 1 or text to 838255; www.veteranscrisisline.net
- **The American Legion:** www.legion.org or (202)861-2700
- **VA Caregiver Support:** 800-855-260-3274 or www.caregiver.va.gov

- **OIF/OEF/OND:** 866-606-8216 or www.oefoif.va.gov/
- **Women Veterans Health Care:** 202461-1070 or www.womenshealth.va.gov
- **Military Sexual Trauma:** 800-827-1000 or www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome.asp
- **Homeless Veterans:** 877-424-3838 or www.va.gov/homeless/
- **VA Home Loans:** www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/ or 888-244-6711
- **Native American Direct Loans:** www.benefits.va.gov/HOMELOANS/nadl.asp
- **Adapted Housing:** www.benefits.va.gov/HOMELOANS/adaptedhousing.asp
- **Readjustment Counseling:** www.vetcenter.va.org

[vetcenter.va.org](http://www.vetcenter.va.org)

- **Non service connected pension:** www.benefits.va.gov/pension/
- **Dependency and Indemnity Compensation:** benefits.va.gov/COMPENSATION/types-dependency_and_indemnity.asp
- **Education Benefits:** www.gibill.va.gov or 888-442-4551
- **VA Burial Benefits:** www.cem.va.gov/cem/
- **VA Life Insurance Programs:** www.insurance.va.gov or call 800-669-8477
- **Discharge Upgrade/Correction of Military Records:** 202-861-2700
- **VA Benefits:** 800-827-1000
- **Woman Veterans:** 202-461-1070

Join Department to Raise Funds for your Post!

Jennifer Cooper, Fundraising Director
jcooper@floridalegion.org

The American Legion, Department of Florida is pleased to announce an exciting new way for you and your Post to join us and collectively raise funds. Together, we will be able to support our Post, Department and ultimately help our Florida Veterans. Plus, participants have 31 opportunities to win cash prizes!!

We would like to introduce the **"For God and Country Holiday Raffle"**. Tickets are just a suggested donation amount of \$5. Proceeds will be divided between the Department, participating Post, and prize pool. One winner will be selected EVERY DAY in the month of December.

You and your Post can make a real difference for Veterans in your community and across the state by participating in

the **For God and Country Holiday Raffle**. Donations can be collected at the Post, within in the community, and among friends or neighbors! That means we can all do more for Florida's service members AND the prize pool goes up with every ticket sold.

Imagine if every member in the Department sold just FOUR raffle tickets – that could be a prize pool of over \$400,000!!!

More details coming soon on how you can buy tickets or get them for your Post to sell.

Let's make this a December to remember!! More details will be coming soon on how your Post can participate and get your tickets to sell. We can make the **For God and Country Holiday Raffle** a huge success for us all!

FLORIDA SAMPL
 THE AMERICAN LEGION
 FLORIDALEGION.ORG

— SHOW YOUR —
SUPPORT

The American Legion
 official license plate.

Proceeds benefit Veterans and their families in the State of Florida.

Now available at your local tag office!

NOW HIRING!

CASE WORKERS NEEDED: We have two part-time positions available to help process financial assistance applications for veterans. Individuals will need to be able to work in the Legion Department Headquarters office in Orlando. If you are interested, please contact Jennifer Cooper for the full job description.
jcooper@floridalegion.org or 407-295-2631



June 30, 2021 Final 2020-2021 Report (99.5%)		
11	Johnny Castro	118.10%
15	Bruce Carl	113.10%
12	Dennis Mallon	106.63%
1	Lamar Carroll	101.11%
4	Cherie Korn	99.72%
17	Jim Bowers	98.63%
6	Kurt Gies	98.16%
5	Troy Horsley	97.94%
16	Randall McNabb	96.15%
3	Stuart Scott	95.99%
13	Brian "Taz" Gehling	94.05%
8	Skip Felicita	91.96%
9	Arthur Barber	91.63%
7	Burl Thomas	90.17%
14	Thomas Frank	88.76%
2	Roger Hewitt	85.92%
Eastern	Chris Hamrick	101.86%
Southern	Paul Bosco	100.95%
Central	Sid Damsgard	99.56%
Western	John Edens	98.41%
Northern	Marie Conti	98.29%
Southwestern	Jerry Faight	93.24%
Post 400		106.97%
Post 208		87.67%



LEGIONNAIRE INSURANCE TRUST

Call Now: 1-800-235-6943
Monday - Friday 8AM - 7PM (EST)



**DEPARTMENT TRUSTED.
LEGIONNAIRE APPROVED.**
We provide a wide range of benefits designed to protect you, your family and your health.

From Your American Legion Department

We are committed to serving the unique insurance needs of LIT members and their families.



Emergency and Accident

A crisis can strike at any moment. Learn how we can help you prepare for the unexpected and get assistance when you need it most.




Insurance Coverage

From health to auto, we offer valuable insurance products designed to fit the specific needs of Legionnaires.



No Cost Protection

Your valued status as a Legionnaire makes you eligible for LegionCare, up to \$5,000.00 in NO COST to you benefits.



Cancer Care Insurance Plan

The Legionnaire Insurance Trust products and services are there when you them most. Listen to how others have benefited from services like our Cancer Care Insurance Plan.

- Cash benefits sent to Legionnaire members diagnosed with cancer
- We send you money – even if you don't have cancer

www.thelit.com

EARLY BIRD MEMBERSHIP GOAL

50%

BY SEPTEMBER 1, 2021

American Legion Department of Florida 11th District Annual Roast



OCTOBER 23, 2021

6:30p : Reception

7:00P: Dinner

7:45P: Program

American Legion

Rood-Williams

Post 271

775 US Hwy One

Tequesta, FL 33469

RSVP NLT

October 10, 2021



DIANNE BOLAND
DEPARTMENT COMMANDER 2018-2019

**Guest Of Honor— Past Department Commander
Dianne Boland**

Dinner and Entertainment to be Announced.

Tickets: \$35.00

**Payment by Zelle using # 410-610-9263, Cash,
or Check**

Make Checks Payable to: SAL SQ 47 (in notes put District Roast)

**Mail to: 1309 Crestwood Blvd. Lake Worth Beach, FL
33460**



SPACE COAST

Honor Flight



Saturday, 18 September 2021

STARS & STRIPES

An evening honoring Veterans at the



3500 Sarno Rd., Melbourne FL 32934
Enter from Club 52/Melbourne Greyhound Park Entrance on
Sarno Rd. or Wickham Rd.

View one of the largest collections of cars and the largest
100% solar-powered car museum in the world

- *Museum campus is smoke-free and vapor-free*
- *Must be 16 years or older to enter this event*
- *Business casual attire*

Tickets:

- \$200 Donation 5:00pm VIP Entry & Private Tour
- \$100 Donation 6:30pm General Admission Entry

All tickets include hors d'oeuvres, beer/wine, soft drinks

Order Tickets:

Online: www.spacecoasthonorflight.org

Email: treasurer@spacecoasthonorflight.org

Phone: 321 759-1063

All proceeds benefit Space Coast Honor Flight, Inc. a 501(c)3 Non-Profit Corporation. Suggested donations are tax deductible



Student Application
December 16-19, 2021
Department Headquarters, Orlando

Section One – Personal Information

Last Name _____ First _____ MI _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Cell Phone _____ Home Phone _____

Email Address _____ DOB _____ Gender _____

Section Two - Military and American Legion Service

Branch(es) of Service _____ Dates of Service _____

Year Joined Legion _____ American Legion Post # _____ Membership ID _____

List American Legion Offices previously/currently held and when:

Date Completed The American Legion Extension Institute (Required) Month _____ Year _____

Section Three – Education and Career Information

Educational Background (Check highest level achieved)

_____ High School Diploma _____ Technical/Trade Degree _____ Some College

_____ Associate Degree _____ Bachelor’s Degree _____ Postgraduate Degree

Professional Background (Briefly describe your job and how long you have been in that position)

List other groups you are associated with and offices held: (Circle those you are actively involve in or with)

Section Four – Written or typed essay (required – must be included with this application)

FLALC Selection Committee Letter

The FLALC Selection Committee will review applications and make the final selection by December 21st, 2018. In 300 words or less, tell them why you want to attend the Florida American Legion College and how you would apply the knowledge you will acquire and will help your District and the Department of Florida. This is an important part of the selection process and it is an opportunity for you to present yourself in your own words. Your comments must be typewritten (use pages 3 & 4).



COMMANDER SHIRT ORDER FORM 2021-2022



Did you know you can order online? Just go to www.floridalegionstore.org

Name: _____ Post: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

DELIVERY METHOD

Pick Up at HQ Orlando Delivery*

*Additional Shipping fee is required for delivery, see chart below.

Please allow 3-4 weeks for delivery. You will be notified prior to shipment.

Shipping Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

SHIRT OPTIONS

Style	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty		
Men's	XS		S		M		L		XL		2XL		3XL		4XL		5XL	
Ladies'	XS		S		M		L		XL		2XL		3XL		4XL			

TOTAL

Shirts are **\$35 each**, add **\$6 each** for extended sizes 2XL-5XL, price includes personalization. Please see next page for personalization options. If tax exempt, please include copy of exemption form.

DELIVERY FEES*

Order Subtotal	Shipping Cost	Order Subtotal	Shipping Cost
\$30.01 - \$50.00	\$8.95	\$300.01 - \$400	\$24.95
\$50.01 - \$100.00	\$9.95	\$400.01 - \$500	\$33.95
\$100.01 - \$200.00	\$15.95	\$500.01 & over	\$39.95
\$200.01 - \$300.00	\$21.95		

Subtotal	\$
Tax (6.5%)	\$
Shipping	\$
Grand Total	\$

PAYMENT

Please return form and payment to Department Headquarters:

The American Legion, Dept of FL; Attn: Emblem Sales, PO Box 547859, Orlando, FL 32854

Cash Check # _____ Credit Card

Card Type: Visa Mastercard Discover American Express

Card Holder Name: _____

Credit Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____ Security Code: _____ Billing Zip Code: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

P.O. BOX 547859
ORLANDO, FL 32854-7859

www.floridalegion.org

TOLL FREE (800) 393-3378
FAX (407) 299-0901



COMMANDER SHIRT ORDER FORM

2021-2022

PERSONALIZATION (Line 1 example: First Name Last Name. Line 2 example: Post # Title)

Size: _____ Line 1: _____

Qty: _____ Line 2: _____

Size: _____ Line 1: _____

Qty: _____ Line 2: _____

Size: _____ Line 1: _____

Qty: _____ Line 2: _____

Size: _____ Line 1: _____

Qty: _____ Line 2: _____

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Size: _____ Line 1: _____

Qty: _____ Line 2: _____

Size: _____ Line 1: _____

Qty: _____ Line 2: _____

Size: _____ Line 1: _____

Qty: _____ Line 2: _____

By signing below, I agree that I have verified the information provided as correct and free of errors. I acknowledge that The American Legion, Department of Florida is NOT responsible for incorrect information provided.

Signature: _____ Date: _____